

Message Text

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FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES OF
NOV 30, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE NOV 30 INFORMAL SESSION OF THE VIENNA TALKS, THE ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY THE BELGIAN REP, UK REP AND US REP, AND THE EAST BY SOVIET REPS TARASOV AND SHUSTOV, GDR REP OESER AND CZECHOSLOVAK REP MEISNER. THE SESSION WAS A LONG ONE WITH SOME INDIVIDUAL POINTS OF INTEREST.

2. WESTERN REPS CONTRASTED THE AMBIGUITY OF THE EASTERN POSITION ON COMMITMENTS BY DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE US AND USSR REGARDING THEIR PHASE II REDUCTIONS WITH THE WESTERN POSITION ON THIS TOPIC. THEY SAID THAT RECENT EASTERN ASSERTIONS THAT PEACE IN CENTRAL EUROPE HAD BEEN PRESERVED BY THE EAST-WEST FORCE RELATIONSHIP OF APPROXIMATE PARITY IN THE REDUCTION AREA WERE NOT WELL FOUNDED. THE EXISTENCE OF A SITUATION OF EAST-WEST DETERRENCE

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WAS NOT PROOF OF PARITY OF FORCES IN THE AREA, NOR WAS THE

ABSENCE OF CONFLICT PROOF OF STABILITY. WESTERN REPS SHOWED HOW THE WESTERN MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH WAS A COMPROMISE WHICH RESOLVED THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EASTERN DESIRE FOR COMPREHENSIVE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS AND WESTERN REFUSAL TO CONTRACTUALIZE EASTERN ARMAMENT SUPERIORITIES.

3. EASTERN REPS CRITICIZED WESTERN DEC 16 NUCLEAR WITHDRAWAL PROPOSALS AS FAR TOO LIMITED. THEY SOUGHT TO JUSTIFY THE EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTION METHOD AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND FAIR REDUCTION METHOD. IN COURSE OF ATTEMPT TO REBUT WESTERN CRITICISM OF EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL, TARASOV IMPLIED THAT THE STAGE ONE COMMITMENTS THE EAST ENVISAGED FOR THE WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE US WOULD NOT ENTAIL SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW FORCES BY UNITS OR TO REDUCE THE ARMAMENTS OF THESE UNITS, BUT HE USED LANGUAGE WHICH DEFINITELY LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMMITMENT IN PRINCIPLE BY NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN A FIRST AGREEMENT TO THE CONCEPT THAT ALL REDUCTIONS SHOULD BE BY UNITS AND INCLUDE THE ARMAMENTS OF THESE UNITS.

4. BELGIAN REP LED OFF WITH CRITICISM THAT THE EASTERN CONCEPT OF COMMITMENTS BY DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE US AND USSR IN A FIRST AGREEMENT REGARDING THEIR SECOND STAGE REDUCTIONS WAS AMBIGUOUS AND COULD ENTIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE ENTIRE EASTERN REDUCTION PROGRAM.

5. IN FIRST OF TWO EASTERN PRESENTATIONS ON REDUCTIONS OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS, CZECHOSLOVAK REP DWELT ON THE NEED FOR ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS. HE CLAIMED NATO PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS AND SAID THAT ALL NATO DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN THE AREA EXCEPT CANADA AND LUXEMBOURG HAD NUCLEAR COMPONENTS IN THEIR FORCES.

6. UK REP CRITICIZED CONTENTION OF TARASOV IN NOV 23 SESSION THAT THERE WAS STABILITY IN THE REDUCTION AREA AND THAT ONE REASON FOR IT WAS THAT THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES IN THE AREA WAS CHARACTERIZED BY PARITY. THE WEST DID NOT ACCEPT THAT THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES IN THE REDUCTION AREA WAS CHARACTERIZED BY PARITY OR STABILITY. GROUND FORCE DISPARITIES CREATED INSTABILITY. THE ABSENCE OF ACTUAL CONFLICT WAS NOT PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF STABILITY. ACCEPTANCE OF THE
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EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WOULD INTENSIFY THIS INSTABILITY. PARTICIPANTS NEEDED AN OUTCOME BASED ON SOMETHING MORE THAN THE EXISTENCE OF DETERRENCE, SOMETHING WHICH WOULD CREATE GREATER STABILITY IN THE AREA, DIMINISHING THE RISK OF CONFLICT AND SUBSEQUENT NUCLEAR ESCALATION.

7. GDR REP CONTINUED EASTERN PRESENTATION ON NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS. HE CRITICIZED WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS AS OMITTING MANY US NUCLEAR

ARMAMENTS, INCLUDING LANCE AND NUCLEAR ARTILLERY, AND FOR FAILING TO COVER NUCLEAR COMPONENTS HELD BY THE WESTERN EUROPEANS. THE WESTERN PROPOSAL THEREFORE WOULD CREATE THE POSSIBILITY FOR INCREASING AND STOCKPILING NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS IN THE REDUCTION AREA. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS WAS LOW. THE EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSALS ON THE OTHER HAND PROVIDED AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS.

8. US REP POINTED OUT THAT, THROUGH ITS FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES, THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE ISSUE OF ENHANCING STABILITY AND DIMINISHING THE RISK OF CONFLICT WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCALATION WHICH CONFLICT WOULD ENTAIL. THE WEST WAS OFFERING AT LEAST AS MUCH AS IT WAS ASKING FOR FROM THE EAST. THEREFORE, EASTERN DEMANDS THAT NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD REDUCE NUCLEAR COMPONENTS AMOUNTED TO AN EFFORT TO GAIN UNILATERAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE FOR THE EAST. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT WHEN ONE TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT ADJACENT TERRITORY OF THE SOVIET UNION CONTAINED VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS WHICH THE SOVIETS WERE AUGMENTING THROUGH MODERNIZATION. US REP ARGUED THAT THE WESTERN MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH WAS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO A SITUATION WHERE COMPREHENSIVE REDUCTIONS OF ARMAMENTS WERE EXCLUDED BY THE FACT THAT THE EAST REFUSED TO REDUCE MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN HOLDINGS OF ARMAMENTS IN THE AREA AND THAT THE WEST REFUSED TO CONTRACTUALIZE EASTERN SUPERIORITY IN MANY MAJOR ARMAMENTS.

9. SHUSTOV COMMENTED THAT THE WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS CONTAINED NO MEASURE WHICH WOULD PREVENT THE WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR DELIVERY VEHICLES, NUCLEAR-CAPABLE F-4'S AND PERSHING'S, FROM REAPPEARING IN THE REDUCTION AREA IN THE HANDS OF THE NATO ALLIES OF THE US. TARASOV COMPARED THE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH BASED ON EQUAL
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PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS WITH ALLEGED WESTERN INSISTENCE ON A METHOD OF ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS. HE SAID THAT, IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, A PACKAGE APPROACH WAS USEFUL, BUT THAT THE WESTERN MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH, AS APPLIED IN THE VIENNA TALKS, WAS NEITHER MUTUAL NOR EQUITABLE.

10. IN REPLY TO WESTERN QUESTIONS AS TO WHAT COMMITMENTS THE EAST ACTUALLY ENVISAGED FOR DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE US AND USSR WITH REGARD TO THEIR PHASE II REDUCTIONS, TARASOV REPLIED THAT, UNDER THE ORIGINAL EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH OF NOV 1973, REDUCTIONS WERE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN SMALL AND LARGE UNITS TOGETHER WITH THE ARMAMENTS AND COMBAT EQUIPMENT OF THESE UNITS. EASTERN PARTICIPANTS CONSIDERED THAT IF NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THE VOLUME OF THE MANPOWER OF THEIR FORCES WHICH THEY WERE WILLING TO REDUCE IN THE SECOND PHASE,

QUOTE THIS WOULD MEAN UNQUOTE THAT THEY WOULD REDUCE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF FORCES WITH THEIR ARMAMENTS AND COMBAT EQUIPMENT. EASTERN PARTICIPANTS DID NOT INSIST THAT THE GENERAL COMMITMENT SHOULD SPECIFY WHAT ARMAMENTS AND COMBAT EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE REDUCED. THESE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THE CHARACTER OF UNITS TO BE REDUCED AND THE TYPE OF WEAPONS TO BE REDUCED WITH THESE UNITS, COULD IN THE EASTERN VIEW REPRESENT THE SUBJECT MATTER OF PHASE II NEGOTIATIONS.

11. SHUSTOV ASKED US REP WHETHER THE WESTERN PROPOSAL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY MEANT THAT THE OTHER WEAPONS AT THE DISPOSAL OF THAT TANK ARMY SHOULD ALSO BE WITHDRAWN. US REP SAID THE WEST EXPECTED A TANK ARMY TO BE WITHDRAWN IN UNITS WITH ITS EQUIPMENT. IF SHUSTOV'S QUESTION AIMED AT THE UNDERLYING ISSUE OF LIMITATIONS, THE SPECIFICS OF THIS TOPIC WERE BETTER ADDRESSED AT A LATER DATE.

12. UK REP POINTED OUT IN RESPONSE TO TARASOV'S CRITICISM OF UK REP'S REMARKS EARLIER IN THE SESSION THAT DETERRENCE WAS BASED LARGELY ON FORCES BASED OUTSIDE THE REDUCTION AREA. CONSEQUENTLY, EXISTENCE OF DETERRENCE DID NOT MEAN THERE WAS STABILITY WITHIN THE REDUCTION AREA. THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WAS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE STABILITY IN THE AREA. IN REPLY, CZECHOSLOVAK AND GDR REPS CLAIMED THERE ALREADY WAS STABILITY IN THE AREA. THEY CLAIMED THE REAL NEGOTIATING ISSUE WAS A QUITE DIFFERENT ONE OF REDUCING AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF VORCES ON AN
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EQUAL PERCENTAGE BASIS, WHICH WOULD NOT UNDERMINE THAT STABILITY. END SUMMARY.
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